

From: Brian Butte
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/16/01 11:40pm
Subject: Microsoft's Monopoly

I am a 31 year old professional consultant with pwc consulting specializing in Internet portal technologies and infrastructure. My strong technical background started with my fascination with TRS-80 computers in 1980 and blossomed into my Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering. I have written software utilized in over 10 million GM cars and trucks as part of the Engine Control Module, designed 100% uptime environments for dot coms and dot bombs, and built CRM solutions for some of the Fortune 500. I am recognized as an expert in my fields including public presentations and publication.

I state my qualifications because I am not sure that anyone deciding the fate of Microsoft has the technical capacity to understand the state of Microsoft's monopoly nor its impact on innovation. What is easy for people can be harmful. As a parent of three children under the age of four, I can unequivocally state that although jumping down the stairs is easier than walking, it can result in disaster. A child must be reprimanded for inappropriate behaviour lest they never learn to become a productive part of society. How often do the unrestricted actions of another child influence your own child to act outside the well established boundaries of acceptable behaviour? Deterrence is the most effective means to discipline a child; action, reaction. Consider your son or daughter caught at school misbehaving. Did you witness the act? No. Is the damage done? Yes. Do you dismiss the circumstance? Not as a responsible parent. You make sure the child understands the behaviour is wrong, you punish the child appropriately, and most importantly you do not let your child profit from the endeavour in hopes they learn crime doesn't pay. As important for society, the child influences other children through repetition of the same rules of behaviour and repeats the lesson for their children. Examples of right and wrong reinforce the rules of society for everyone, including companies.

Without a breakup of Microsoft, the United States Government endorses their strong arm tactics and unfair competition. I am not concerned about Microsoft, but rather I am concerned about precedent. The reality of the Microsoft case is that the damage is done and cannot be remedied; even by so strong a statement as dissolving the corporate bond between the operating systems, development tools, and software packages. However, their actions are inexcusable.

Microsoft has stolen ideas from many companies, repackaged the ideas, and mass marketed them to the public. How can the world be better off when Microsoft stifles invention? Were the inventors of the web server, windowing interface, mouse, web browser, file compression, and countless others better off because of Microsoft? Did they have the chance to sell

their ideas to the public unhindered by competition with their own ideas? Anyone who answers yes clearly lacks integrity and would have the United States Government endorse the actions of RCA in stealing the concept of television from its inventor, Philo Farnsworth. We have one multi-billion dollar employer of thousands instead of multiple multi-billion dollar employers of thousands. We have hundreds of hyper-millionaires from Microsoft and thousands who have seen promised millions crumble to dust. What promise you ask? The promise of the American Dream! Is this the lesson we want to teach to our children; to replace the promise of Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Alexander Graham Bell in favor of Bill Gates whose only invention is the software license agreement that says when the software doesn't work, tough?

What will happen, and it will happen, when the new Microsoft comes along and dominates the industry. Not possible? It has already happened once. The United States sued IBM for anti-trust and won. What key mistake did IBM make during the deliberations? They decided to focus on mainframes and thus handed Microsoft the key to a powerful world. Microsoft outgrew their world and starting exploring others which lead to theft, invasion, and finally domination.

If Microsoft is not held accountable for their actions, not only is the clear message to corporate America that crime does pay, but that it pays well. If logic, and not special interests, prevail, Microsoft will be held accountable for their actions with a penalty as severe as their ill-gotten success.

Brian Butte

CC: Jolene Butte, Jerrel Mattson, Helene Butte, marniehar...